

Nº 42.

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THE
FAST-DAY.

A
POEM.

[Price Sixpence.]

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

WHILE the *Spartan* Admiral held his Weapon over the Head of *Themistocles*; provoked at the Freedom of his Speech, and the Importance of his Manner; *Strike and welcome*, said the brave *Athenian*, *but bear me*. Something of this nature the Author inclines to say to any critical or disgusted Readers: *Censure as you will, but bear him*. Assured of the Importance of his Subject, and the Goodness of his Cause, he wishes to be *heard*, be the Consequence as it may. With this View he has ventured out of his Element, and written in Verse, what he might much more conveniently have said in Prose. And if he can produce any Conviction, or any good Dispositions in the Minds of his Countrymen, he cheerfully resigns his little Poem as a Prey to the Critics.

An unaccountable Accident having obliged the Author to revise and correct these Verses again and again; he thinks it incumbent on him to ask Pardon of the first and second Purchasers; and the more so, as no other Reparation can well be expected in so small a Work.



THE
FAST-DAY.

A
P O E M.

Diis te minorem quod geris, imperas.

H O R.

By JOHN BALGUY, M. A. Vicar of *Northallerton*,
and Prebendary of *SARUM*.

The THIRD EDITION, Corrected and Enlarged.

L O N D O N:

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M DCC XLI.



T H E
FAST-DAY.

PURE Form celestial! Progeny divine!
Whose wondrous Draught is Life's unerring Line;
Religion! Whither are thy Glories fled?
What new-sprung Cares infest thy sacred Head?
With Grace peculiar long inur'd to smile
On this blest Land, thy own selected Isle;
Now thy bright Flames with faded Lustre burn,
And veil'd in Clouds thy radiant Face we mourn.

To

To Thee transferr'd, invariably the same,
 Back on our guilty Heads recoils the Blame.
 By Starts of Humour, Storms of Passions tost,
 In Folly's Labyrinths we wander lost:
 Impell'd by endless Flux of wanton Will,
 We chuse, reject, recover; plunging still
 Through all Diversities of Good and Ill.

BRITONS reflect what wondrous Cause inspires
 This restless Turn, these voluble Desires.
 From Sun to Sun, why such Rotations feel?
 Why nearly frame your Measures by the Wheel?
 Plead not your Laws, your Liberties, your Clime;
 Vain is the Plea which aggravates the Crime.
 Such precious Gifts, since Heav'n profusely pours,
 If trod beneath your Feet, what Guilt is yours?
 God's Bounty, Ocean like, furrounds your Land;
 His Favours countless as your Grains of Sand:



If no devout, no grateful Sense be shown,
Confess your Hearts impenetrable Stone.

Let Fools deride and vex the sacred Theme;
Justly we bow before the World's Supreme;
His boundless Wisdom, matchless Pow'r adore,
And propagate his Praise from Shore to Shore.
Through Ages past, since Monarchy began,
Mark the wide Homage paid Imperial Man!
His Frame a Bubble, and his Life a Span.
If Order justifies such Homage given,
Prevail no Rules of Order towards Heaven?
To Crowns submissive, why not prostrate fall
Before the Sovereign Majesty of all?
To earthly Monarchs decent Incense bring;
Devote your All to Heav'n's eternal King.

But can the King of Heav'n thus low descend?
To Men, presumptuous Reptiles, Audience lend!

He,

He, who unerring guides the mighty Helm;
 Eternity his Reign, Infinitude his Realm!
 Can He regard Men's little Works and Ways?
 Or not condemn such Miniatures of Praise?
 A Mind all-perfect must true Virtue love,
 The Fit, the Just, the Beautiful approve,
 Or beaming here, or blazing out above;
 In the least virtuous Act some Charm can see;
 In Kind the same, tho' humbler in Degree.
 While Seraphs pure with Fragrance fill the Skies,
 From earthly Praise no grateful Odours rise?
 Here then we fix; rejecting that rude Plan,
 Which shews God's Image quite revers'd in Man.

If not beneath the Architect Divine
 To form our Species, Part of his Design;
 Why not inspect Man's Conduct, guard his State?
 Why, when created, leave him desolate?
 Mark too the devious Doctrine, erring wide,
 Which springs from human Littleness and Pride.

High

High Forms of State, mysterious Arts of Show,
 Repelling Aspect, Scorn of all below,
 Some Rays of spurious Majesty may gain,
 And strike obsequious Vassals not in vain;
 May swell the Pomp of Oriental Kings;
 But no false Colour real Greatness brings.
 True Greatness, Glory, justly understood,
 Must flow from Love of Truth, and wide-spread Good;
 Must Pow'r exert that Blessings may abound;
 Men's Sorrows sooth, and scatter Joys around.

So pure a Sacrifice if still withstood,
 To Bonds of Truth be join'd attractive Good:
 Man's noblest Pow'rs well fitted to employ,
 It glads the grateful Soul with heart-felt Joy;
 To blissful Temper sweetly working tends,
 And Wings to soar aloft angelic lends;
 From Darts incessant Virtues Warriors shields,
 To anguish'd Minds the richest Cordial yields.

Next turn to Them who, in these dubious Days,
 Contend for dumb Devotion, silent Praise.
 Mere mental Worship leaves no lasting Trace,
 Till dress'd in Modes of Speech, and Time, and Place:
 These fan the Flame, and bid it stronger rise,
 Which pent decays, and suffocated dies.
 Hence pure Affections with fresh Vigour glow,
 And Heav'nly Raptures kindle here below.

To private Reasons social Motives join,
 When pious Numbers mingle Praise Divine.
 How beautiful! when Sons of Men resort
 Crouding in Tribes to pierce the Sacred Court;
 For common Wants joint Supplications bring,
 For publick Blessings publick Praises sing!
 If you insist pure Worship is confin'd
 To secret Workings of the conscious Mind;
 Vain are all Forms, devoted Structures vain;
 Each Law a Nufance, each Provision Pain:

But

[II]

But all may feel reluctant Nature rise
Against that Thought; and Nature must be wise.

On Reason's Beam unclouded cast your Eye;
Then silent, vocal Praise comparing try.
Fruitless, on Heav'ns Account, both Words and Sound;
To Human Ends they variously redound.
Devout Examples mutual Zeal excite,
Improvement seasoning with severe Delight.
Fit Sounds exalt the Soul, high Thoughts inspire,
And with new Fervor burns the holy Fire.
Yet more this Transport vocal Praise promotes,
When rais'd by sweeter and more solemn Notes:
The Organs Charm! quick pour'd in Floods of Sound;
Resistless Rapture striking All around!
Such Harmony blest Angels might approve,
Resembling their melodious Quires above.

BRITONS, when caught before the Throne of Grace,
What means that conscious Misconcern of Face?

As if one Glance religiously inclin'd
 Betray'd an abject, servile, groveling Mind!
 Such thy Enchantments, Sin! thy miscreant Arts,
 Confounding human Heads as well as Hearts;
 Discolouring fairest Actions, blanching foul;
 Snares unperceiv'd by each unguarded Soul.

But on past Ages turning back our Eyes,
 Behold! ideal Ancestors arise.
 Undaunted They, both when they pray'd and fought;
 Not poorly bashful, blushing devout.
 Amid surrounding Troops, see! clad in Steel,
 Before high Heav'n victorious Monarchs kneel;
 Imploring Aid before the Fight begun,
 Or Thanks returning for a Battle won.
 Thus too the Ancients, Histories record,
Greeks, Romans, their fictitious Gods ador'd.
 Shamefac'd Religion then nor seen, nor known,
 Reserv'd for Manners modest as our own.

If at all Times the World's great Ruler claim
 Due Rev'rence paid to his tremendous Name ;
 Much more when Signals are set up on High,
 And all abroad vindictive Arrows fly.
 Amidst the Rage of desolating War,
 And furious Tempests thund'ring from afar ;
 When Discord, flaming in her sanguine Robe,
 Embraces horrid Half the frightened Globe :
 When Elements conflicting frown severe,
 With Vengeance arm'd to blast the rising Year ;
 Fierce Torrents deluging *European* Lands,
 And fruitful Soils devour'd by barren Sands ;
 Behold in dread Array ! Distracting Fear !
 Famine the Van, and Pestilence the Rear !
 When rooted spread the baneful Weeds of Strife,
 With rankest License, Luxury of Life ;
 Mens Minds unhing'd, their Morals batter'd down,
 And Irreligion stanch Politeness grown :

Thus

Thus circumstanc'd, how dare we not attend,
 And strive to make Omnipotence our Friend!
 With humblest Hearts the common Guilt deplore,
 Intensely aiming to offend no more.
 Whom Kindness melts not, Judgments may subdue,
 And rigid Tears extort from Sins hard Crew.
 To Him submit the most Intrepid must,
 Whose potent Breath dissolves them into Dust;
 Whose lifted Arm, the Terrors of his Rod,
 Can teach the Boldest to revere their God.

Should the gay Tribe with pointed Scorn refuse
 So grave a Lecture, such a preaching Muse;
 Know, the first Muses pious Numbers chose,
 And preach'd in Verse before Men taught in Prose.
 To Nature's Wonders, Nature's mighty Lord,
 Each Voice was tun'd; resounded ev'ry Chord.
 By such exalted Strains Mens Hearts were fir'd;
 The Song grew sacred, and the Bard inspir'd.

To

To catch the Publick Ear when Truth prevails,
 Fearless ſhe works her Way, ſpreads all her Sails:
 Denied Access, and all her Efforts vain,
 Suspended ſtands her fair ideal Train.
 Thus num'rous Fleets ſcarce impotently creep,
 All Hands appear diſabled, or aſleep,
 When a Dead-Calm faſt binds the Boſom of the Deep.

Yet one impreſſive Word remains to ſay,
 A private *Motto* for a Publick Day:
 BRITONS be Wiſe, Religious, Juſt and True,
 And *Spain* ſhall tremble even for *Peru*.

F I N I S.

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